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HOUSE MEMORIAL 67

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015

INTRODUCED BY

Patricia Roybal Caballero

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE PASSAGE OF AN ERA OF SOCIAL ACTIVISM SIGNIFIED
BY THE PASSING OF REIES LOPEZ TIJERINA.

WHEREAS, Reies Lopez Tijerina died on January 20, 2015;
and

WHEREAS, no history of twentieth century America will be
complete without an examination of what became known as the
"Chicano Movement", multiple campaigns for social change that
included several leaders who were born in or lived in New
Mexico; and

WHEREAS, no history of twentieth century New Mexico will
be complete without an examination of the efforts and
activities of those activist leaders, and in particular, of
Reies Lopez Tijerina and the organization he founded, *La*
Alianza Federal de Mercedes, the federal alliance of land grant

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1 communities; and

2 WHEREAS, defining the significance of the efforts of Reies
3 Lopez Tijerina and *La Alianza Federal de Mercedes* requires
4 examining the historical context in which they took place; and

5 WHEREAS, after the end of the Mexican-American War in
6 1848, the single largest governmental, social and cultural
7 challenge faced by the New Mexico territory and much of the
8 American west was the incorporation of a large, established
9 population of formerly Mexican citizens into the new body
10 politic; and

11 WHEREAS, in the generations following the war, most of the
12 farming communities that had received community land rights
13 under Mexican law lost those lands, many due to convoluted
14 legal decisions that tried to interpret Mexican land law
15 through the prism of United States land law; and

16 WHEREAS, in 1963, Reies Lopez Tijerina founded *La Alianza*
17 *Federal de Mercedes*, commonly referred to as *La Alianza*, a New
18 Mexican organization with the aim to return traditional
19 community lands to dispossessed farming communities and using
20 methods that started with public awareness campaigns but that
21 grew in intensity; and

22 WHEREAS, the premise of *La Alianza* was that the heirs to
23 the traditional township community lands, referred to as
24 *mercedes* or land grants, had received protected property rights
25 under the terms of the treaty commonly referred to as the

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1 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that had ended the Mexican-American
2 War; and

3 WHEREAS, the efforts of Reies Lopez Tijerina and *La*
4 *Alianza* inspired a new generation of community leaders and
5 increased public awareness of the role that land grant
6 communities have played in the development of New Mexico's
7 unique culture; and

8 WHEREAS, the efforts of the current generation of land
9 grant community leaders have led to a 2001 congressional
10 general accounting office report on the history of land grant
11 communities and the loss of their community lands; the creation
12 of an interim land grant committee by the New Mexico
13 legislature; laws establishing some community land grants as
14 political subdivisions of the state; and the creation of a
15 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo division within the office of the
16 attorney general;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
18 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the passing of
19 Reies Lopez Tijerina be recognized as heralding the passage of
20 a national era of civil rights and social activism that started
21 in the 1950s and provided the foundation and motivation for
22 continued social activism in pursuit of equality and justice
23 today; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Reies Lopez Tijerina be
25 recognized for bringing issues to the forefront of public

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1 discussion that had a significant impact on the culture,
2 politics and laws of New Mexico; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
4 transmitted to the secretary of cultural affairs.

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